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AS THE YEARS PASS—THE DIARIES OF
SETH SHALER ARNOLD (1788-1871),
VERMONT

EDITED

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Editor, Proceedings

Rare are the Vermont diaries of long ago which reveal an accurate, intelligent, trained mind, unmoved by bias or prejudice, noting with understanding and sympathy as the years pass the little details of living and the greater events that have their hour beneath the uneven surface of community and sectional life. We are giving you excerpts from a series of diaries that cover 397 single-spaced typewritten pages in copied form. Beginning in 1809, Mr. Arnold faithfully recorded a wide range of incidents, including routine matters of daily living merged with comments touching on the great issues of birth and death. The task of selecting items for publication from such rich material seemed hopeless and was. What we have tried to do, facing the stern challenge of limited space, was to choose material that might be of some value in giving actual facts and points of view with regard to the social, economic, industrial, and religious life of Vermont during years of pronounced changes. Here, for instance, is the first clear picture known to us of the early silkworm-growing

to look with Mr. Towne at my house and land. Mr. Lucius E. Town is to give me \$60.00 for my house and farm of 23 acres and to pay all the taxes. To be paid half in cash, and half in work—in quarterly payments. I give him the straw on hand & the plaster-paris on hand. He is expected to keep things in order—to keep cattle out of the house lot, to secure the little trees and to make good incidental damages. He is to plant as much ground to rye as there is now on the farm—To be ploughed twice, and harrowed well. After the first ploughing in June he is to seed with buck wheat and harrow well; & to turn in the buck wheat at the second ploughing. Seed with at least $1\frac{1}{4}$ bushel to the acre about the first of september and harrow well. I am to find all the buck wheat for seed—and all the grass seed. I let him have dead wood down in the forest for a shilling per cord. If he will plough up the grass above the house I will pay for a yoke of oxen and plough while doing the work. I will give him 50 cts per cord for chopping 4 foot hard wood—splitting it well and cording it up.—And 75 cts a rod for half wall well made, like that of Mr. Williams—posts set and boards nailed on with my direction.—I will pay him one dollar a thousand for making good shingles of the logs already down—to be made well—like those under the shed at father's. He may let in a small family to use the same kitchen—

30. I attended a sacramental lecture preached by Rev. Mr. Wright. Mrs. Arnold and myself were received to the church in Acworth on a letter from the church in the East parish of Westminster—
- May 3. Started for Westminster at 2 oclock P.M. Paid Mr. Wellington account book—and got to East P. of Westminster at 6 eve. and to the West Parish $\frac{1}{2}$ past 8.—Caroline was better.—
22. Went to Papermill-village—met with the Congregational people—and made my proposals—That I would supply the pulpit 3 years for \$300.00 a year—that after 6 months I would preach myself and live among them. If the missionary aid should fail which they expect to receive and they should not be able to make up the support, they are to let me know immediately, that they may not run in debt beyond their means. There is to be a promptness of payment, by settlement and obligation, if not by other means. There is to be a christian, kind and willing cooperation in promoting the cause of Christ and the welfare of this community.
24. Mr. Gould for the committee gave me to understand that the people accepted my proposals, and will depend on me accordingly.

The year is to begin, (or rather the 3 years) the 16th day of this month, or Sab. before last.

I started for Boston through Drewsville—Took dinner with Perry at Mr. Allen's in Surry—and went to Troy where I stopped over night with Mr. Crosby—Called on Esq. Farrer—somewhat rainy.

25. Went on to Rindge, & took dinner about 11 o'clock A.M. with Brot. Burnham. Went to Ashby. Left my horse & carriage with Geo. Hitchcock, and took the stage for Fitchburg, & then the cars to Boston—and stopped at Mr. S. Rust's, where I met with some of my old acquaintance. Attended the meeting of the Home Miss. So. in the eve.

June 13. Preached for Rev. Mr. Richards—In the afternoon presented the cause of Colonization and also at a 3^d service in the town house.

14. Geo. Dickinson gave one dollar. Rev. Mr. Richards \$5.00 to have the repository one year out of it.

17. I was weighed & all my daughters—My weight was 165 lbs—Mary Anns 112½—Olivia 104—Caroline 120—

July 17. Called on not less than a dozen distinguished individuals, all approving of Colonization, and not one would give a cent, or subscribe for the Repository.

22. Miss Kemp made me pants—Paid

23. Now some cooler—Received a letter from Colonization Rooms Washington

Aug. 7. I carried Mrs. Arnold to the W^d Hartwell's to spend the day—Fore part of last night, very restless—latter part, dreamed that I found a wild plant with a splendid red blossom on the top with joints in it full of honey—with white blossoms, and white balls on the stalk by the green leaves, and a large bulbous root, good for food—I thought it would be very valuable if it could be cultivated.

16. Bought 40 lbs of birch peelings of Peter Thayer, and paid him \$2.67—Mrs. Arnold went to Acworth with E. Brooks. Mr. Dinsmore and wife came home a little after 9 o'clock in the eve.

17. Received an invitation to attend Shaker Concert.—

21. I made 8 calls, and conversed with individuals on the subject of religion; and found professors exceedingly cold, reluctant, embarrassing and discouraging.—Many things to discourage today; yet I cannot give up.

29. Preached twice, and attended a 3^d service—There was no universal meeting, and some of that denomination attended our meeting.—

Sept. 2. Circus-company came into the village this morning—and an immense concourse of people before 2 oclock P.M.

3. I and Mrs. Arnold started early for Westminster. This is father's birth day, and he is now 100 years old. His health is quite good, and he appeared to enjoy the visit of his children and grand children well. Were present at dinner—myself and wife—Esther and Abigail—Priscilla & 5 sons, Ambrose, Fenelon, Joel, Henry & Rollin—My 3 children—Fenelon's wife—Mary Ann's husband, Mr. Stevens—and Olivia's babe—a great grand son—In all 16. A pleasant day, & a pleasant visit.

13. It rained last night and very steadily to day. I examined the lister's book concerning taxes.

For 1846—Found whole set to me—Real estate	\$6968
The whole land was } Personal—	394
cal[1]ed 200 acres— } List \$75.63	<hr/>
	7362

1847 My place is set to Seth S. Arnold and L.E.

Towne—\$700—List \$7

Set to Seth Arnold & T.W. Wiley farm 197 acres

at \$6000

personal property 220

grand list \$62.20

 \$6220

Oct. 12. Went to Putney—Capt. J. Hutchins gave me .50 cts for Colonization—Deac. D. Crawford \$1.00—and Isaac Grout \$5.00 his annual subscription. I then went on to Dummerston. It began to rain. I stopped with Rev. Mr. Foster over night.

13. Went to Brattleboro—Called on Rev. Mr. Clapp and got some directions—Went to Rev. Mr. Chandler's—Called on LaFayette Clark who gave 1 dollar and Deac. J. Grout gave the same—Judge Clark gave 5 dolls—In the East parish N.B. Williston gave 10 dolls—G.C. Hall \$5.00—Wells Goodhue \$5.00—T.C. Lord \$1.00—Dr. Rockwell \$1.00 Col. Arnold Hinds .25 cts—Judge Clark would circulate A. Re. Col. Townsley, Absent—He would settle up for the Repository from 1840—so said his son.

19. Commenced distribution of Bibles—sold 2 testaments to Mrs. Lovell, and a pocket Bible to Miss Emely Brown—Called on 4 families.—

20. Called on 5 families with Bibles—Philetta Cook took 2 testaments 31(?) cts—Charles Cook took 1 tes. 9 cts Asa Holden took 1 testament 50 cts.—Mrs. Arnold took tea with me at Mr. Moses Miller's. I paid Mr. Miller \$3.05 for butter, Pork and a barrel of apples to be delivered to my house.

Dec. 11. Temperance society met in the eve. at the school house. The committee reported on the circulation of the temperance manuel. After some discussion the report was accepted and adopted. I was requested to draw up subscription papers for circulation. Adjourned till a fortnight from tomorrow eve.

1848

Jan. 1. I have received for Temperance manuals to this date \$2.70—Have paid out for 115 copies \$4.10—Delivered to Esq. Wait last of the temperance manuals 17 copies

Mar. 7. Society (Con. of P.M. Village) held their annual meeting. After choosing officers, voted to raise \$300.00 for the support of preaching one year from the 16th of next may—& chose a committee to investigate and report on arrears for past preaching. I was on said committee. Committee met in the eve. and attended in part to their duty. Mrs. Livermore—Cooper and Howard visited our house after noon & eve.

26. Preached 3 times—Stopped the church to see if they were in favor of having a Ch'h fast before a great while. The sisters did not tarry. Only four of the brethren expressed a wish to have a church fast. A majority did not choose it.

Apr. 4. Helped Mr. Palmer take the old pump out of the well. Attended Society meeting, & agreed to throw in the 5 doll's due to me if they would clear out the arrears—also at last agreed to give 3 dollars more, and take work of Mr. Kilburn 5 dolls if he would pay 3. & \$2.50 of Mr. Wellington if he would subscribe it—and finally at dark the sum was all made out, to the great joy of us all. Paid Joseph Kingsbury for 66 lbs of beef at 6 cts \$3.96

27. Mr. Weaver assisted me in putting up a pump forenoon. After noon I attended a Ch'h meeting at Rev. Mr. Crosset's, and by his request acted as moderator. The case of Gardner Shepard was brought forward—He was not present, & was understood to treat the citation with contempt. 4 or 5 charges were preferred against him, & were all sustained by what was considered a unanimous vote—none voting against although there were two brethren that

did not vote either way. The Ch'h finally suspended him indefinitely. I returned home about dark—

May 7. Preached twice, and administered the sacrament of the Lord's supper at the intermission noon—I proposed the missionary maps, and the brethren were generally in favor of taking them. It appeared to be the opinion that the maps could be paid for by contributions at other times besides the monthly concerts. Took the regular contribution. Attended the monthly concert at 5 o'clock—Made some general remarks relating to the map of Western Asia. Population, extent, government, religion, missions. Mrs. Mead returned here this eve.

June 12. Bought 2 lbs. of Coffee paid 22 cts. for it—

15. Went to the sewing circle at Charles Cook's, & carried Mrs. A. Mrs. Rogers & Babcock—Willard C. paid me 6 dolls. & 75 cts of the lady's money towards my salary last year.

16. President Labaree, of Middlebury College called on me to obtain funds for the College. He was wishing to raise \$75,000. But, if 25,000 are subscribed, the subscribers are holden. A very warm day.

17. Very warm. Bought Molasses & Tobac 20 cts paid.

18. Preached twice, and lectured on Jerusalem.

30. Rev. Darwin Adams preached Sacramental lecture for me. There were only 15 hearers besides myself.

July 1. Tried Washing machine

2. Preached twice and administered the sacrament of the Lord's supper—Also attended the monthly concert, and to a contribution of \$1.06. In the afternoon I preached on African Colonization.

22. Went with Brot. J. to see the steam shovel work Bought two fresh mackerel. at 15 cts each.

25. At Walpole had an interview with Maj. Gen. Tom Thum. (*sic*) He was a pleasant, well looking gentleman—23 years old—35 inches high—weighing 25 pounds—quite well proportioned. He was from N. Carolina.

26. Tried one of Mr. Babcock's washing machines, & found it to work well.

Aug. 2. Mailed a letter to Dr. Labaree of Middlebury College—giving a note against Rev. Saml A. Benton, of \$53.57 to the College.—

3. Mr. Boutelle took my likeness for himself,—The museum of monster-White bear, & foreign birds exhibited here.—
4. Mr. Kilburn brought down the likeness of Mr. Grout. Mr. Boutelle called with my likeness
10. Attended Lady's circle of Industry at Mr. Rogers very warm—About 10 ladies present.
13. Preached twice—& attended sab. school concert took a collection of 21 cts. Very hot & thin meeting
27. Preached 3 times—Rather thin meeting—much discouraged.
- Sept. 12. Infantry-company trained here—Mrs. A. & I went to Mr. Ingals Densmore's.
- Dec. 4. Settled with the Treasurer (Deac. Brown) for my my (*sic*) labors the year ending May 16. 1848—& left 50 cts in the treasury.—Began to rain

1849

- Jan. 1. 1849. I went with Mrs. A. to Bellows Falls Saw the cars run for the first time from Keene to Charlestown—
8. I went up to Mr. I. Dinsmore's to see a sick child.
25. This night was awaked about 11 o'clock by the fire bell—and found that Rusts, & Webster's store was on fire. The goods were extensively spoiled and the inside of the store destroyed before the fire was got under; which was about 12 o'clock.
26. Perley Emerson brought me a few bundles of straw and said he believed he should not charge me for it if I should come up and see the old folks occasionally.
27. Mr. J. Kingsbury, & S. Cragin called, and exhibited the subscription paper for my support the present year. They supposed there is not more than \$100 yet to be depended on.—
28. I preached twice, and held an evening service. Had a very unhappy night in view of the prospects of this people.
- Feb. 11. Preached twice, and attended the sab. School Con. in the eve. Lectured on Noah—the Ark—the division of the human race—down to about the building of Babel. told the children I would give them a book, as many as would attend punctually till next spring. School contributed 1 dollar. It is expected this will go towards the maps. Mr. Fisher took it.
17. Visited Mr. Burge's school—Many others in.—Rev. N. Barbour called here—In the evening had a prayer meeting, & none of the brethren were in—Nor singers except Esq. Waite.

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18. Preached twice, and attended a third service with the singers.
22. The school and others had an exhibition at Mr. Kent's Hall. Said to be crowded. The circle of industry met at W^m Howard's—Few present—on[ly?] 5 besides my family Another year is gone with me—O, that the next may be better occupied if I should live.
- March 6. I visited Mr. Moses Miller—Took dinner—Mrs. M. gave me a piece of cheese—after noon attended Annual meeting of the Con. Society, and told them I should not expect to labor for them any longer than the present year; and was ready to close any time—or that I would keep along with them, till some suitable man can be obtained.
- April 1. Preached twice, and attended the monthly concert—A contribution was taken of \$1.06 without specifying the object. Proclamation for state fast was read.
29. I preached to the Sab. School in the fore noon and at noon gave the teachers and scholars, a book each—The Sab. School society tried to choose superintendents at their adjourned meeting. Mr. Livermore—Deac. Brown, & Deac. Cragin declined serving. It was understood that Mr. Holden, who was not present, also declined serving. Mr. Fisher utterly refused to serve; and the meeting adjourned to the 2^d sabbath in May. In the afternoon I lectured on Paul's 3^d journey and the close of his life, and took a contribution to pay for the missionary maps of \$1.46—At the 3^d service I spoke and read on the subject of the criminality, inconsistency and danger of profane language.
- May 19. Mr. T. Wiley paid me two dollars for french bedstead & chord. I gave Mr. John Cooper a receipt of one dollar for his work. (Diorama exhibiting in the village.)
22. Deac. Isham brought Olivia's Music box—
- June 7. Bought a fresh mackerel—very good 17 cts.
- July 4. Settled with Mr. J.T.G. Ellis—and made a mistake of 50 cts. in his favor—Went to the R.R. Depot at Walpole—at 8 A.M.—Met the Sabbath Schools there—got aboard of the cars—and arrived at Keene a little before noon—a very large collection—probably more than 4000, the schools of Cheshire County,—Rev. Mr. B. of Keene presided. Rev. Mr. Bullard of Boston addressed the children and parents on filial obedience, very well done. Mr. Crossman and his juvenile Choir from Westmoreland sung.—The Brass Band from Hinsdale gave us their music.

A table 1000 feet long was beautifully furnished with good eatables and cold water. The services were closed—all aboard of the cars and starting for home $\frac{1}{2}$ past 3 P.M. With a very pleasant day, and 14 open cars—shaded with boughs and ornamented—containing over 100 each—and probably 100 or 200 getting in the cars of the regular Boston train. So far as is known all these arrived at their homes before night in safety—delighted with their celebration. Myself and Caroline took tea at Father's and returned just sun set. In this place there was somewhat of an old fashioned celebration.

6. Fenelon Arnold came after me, on account of father's sickness. When I arrived, father was better and appeared pretty well through the day. He dressed himself chiefly, and ate as usual. Was taken with a difficulty of breathing soon after he went to bed at 9 o'clock eve. Was very restless—distressed, and some bewildered in mind, till after 10 o'clock, when he sunk down in ease; had not a struggle afterwards, and died about $\frac{1}{2}$ past 10 o'clock, being 101 years 10 months & 3 days old. He was born according to the present style Sept. 3. 1747.
8. It is very warm and dry weather, yet the corpse is not much changed this morning. After the usual forenoon services Rev. Mr. Gilbert came at 1 o'clock, made a short prayer at the house—Then the procession with the corpse, being conducted by Mr. Sylvester Stoddard, moved to the meeting house where appropriate services were attended to. Mr. Gilbert preached a very good sermon from Job 10:22. After the services, the corpse was exposed to the last look of mourners, and numerous acquaintances. But it had changed very rapidly since being put in the coffin. We, then proceeded to the grave, and deposited the remains by the side of that dear companion who had gone 8 years before him, though about 16 years younger. Numerous mourners, and Mr. Gilbert with his wife, returned to the house of the deceased for refreshment.
9. This morning still dry, fair and warm—There seems to be a great vacancy in father's house. Very much appears to be taken away, and the change great, and sensibly felt, although to be expected for years. Father had lived in this dwelling, ever since Sept. or the 1st of October 1804. and had been very constantly at home.

I settled with D.A. Hills for Coffin-plate and extra trouble—also

with Franklin Stoddard for grave and attendance.—Returned home at 5 P.M. Settled Post office bill to 1st July—38 cts.

10. In reflecting upon my father's death I feel sad. It seems a great and solem (*sic*) thing to breathe the last breath—to give over our struggle and efforts against the king of terrors—to submit to his cruel power—to pass for ever from our friends here to the untried world—to appear before our judge. But if we are conscious that Jesus is *ours*, and we *his*, can we not submit to the change without reluctance? Even with cheerfulness? and the pleasure of hope and love? Oh! that I may have grace to profit by witnessing the last moments of my aged father, lingering in the flesh, on the shores of time;—for which privilege I had so often prayed. To be with him the last day and evening of his life has imparted a lesson to me, that, I hope, will not be forgotten; nor fail to exert a lasting and salutary influence upon my heart and life.

The feelings produced by the death of my wife, daughter, and mother in 1841, are in a measure revived.—Now I have more deliberate reflection in application to my own departure, as I am farther advanced in life:—Then more natural sympathy, and the feelings of grief and loneliness. Then the wound was deep;—and in the sudden and unexpected death of my son in law, the affliction was mysterious and overwhelming. But in all these afflictions I think I can acquiesce; and say with submission “The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord.” And, yet—O, How little have I improved by them!

11. I still reflect upon my father's death.—The man who was born in another century—who lived in other times, and among other generations. What changes have taken place, since his birth, in our world! What changes on this continent! In these united States! With the exception of the period embracing the birth and death of the Lord Jesus—there was probably never another century of more important changes than that in which my father lived. And, although he was deprived of sight for 10 years, so that he could not see them; yet he was very desirous to know what was going on.

Aug. 3. National fast—recommended by President Taylor, on account of the prevalence of the cholera.

- Oct. 23. In the evening, at Mr. Slade's store a Division of the Sons of Temperance was formed called the Cold River Division No 46. I felt considerable anxiety concerning my duty, and finally con-

cluded to join with them. This I meant to do prayerfully,—hoping it might promote the cause of temperance, and seeing no other way in which any thing could be done here effectually, at present. As we had desired and prayed, that the Lord would open some way and point out some means in his providence, to give a new impulse to the temperance enterprise—to give it life, permanency (*sic*) and effect, it seemed reasonable to improve the opportunity thus presented. And, again, if I were to unite with them at all, I wished to take hold with them here at the beginning. There were 13 united at first, and the officers chosen—and I was chosen chaplain.

1850

March 3. Preached twice, and administered the sacrament of the Lord's supper—took a contribution of \$2.00 without specifying the object. Attended the monthly concert in the eve. At the close of the services I gave a general invitation to make me a parochial visit next tuesday—after noon and eve.—

5. Very pleasant, and considerable warmer. The people brought in plentiful provisions. and began to come in: at a seasonable hour in the after noon—took supper about dark—There were probably 90, or 100 different individuals who came in. I made some remarks—had singing and music—closed with prayer and dispersed about 10 o'clock.—I believe it was generally considered a pleasant and satisfactory meeting.—Mesmerizers at Mr. Kent's hall.

PART I

Research Notes by Dorothy C. Walter

1. *Westminster, Vermont, Home of the Seth Arnold Family from about 1782 till the present.*

Before Seth Arnold, the Revolutionary veteran, reached Westminster at about thirty-five years of age with the solitary shilling that remained of his \$1000 pre-Revolutionary savings after war, currency depreciation, and illness had gnawed at his little fortune, Westminster had been the scene of, or had been influenced by, a great many stirring events.

1735. The town had been chartered as "No. 1 in Massachusetts" and named New Taunton.
1744. War between England and France had made the debatable area that is now Vermont unsafe for settlers. Boundary questions had arisen be-

- tween New Hampshire and Massachusetts, and New Taunton was decided not to be in Massachusetts after all.
1752. The town was regranted by New Hampshire (the third New Hampshire Grant) and called Westminster.
- 1759-60. Building of the Crown Point military road from the Connecticut River to the Lake Champlain region.
- 1760-63. Ending of the French war in fact and by treaty makes the wilderness safe for settlement.
1771. Westminster becomes the largest town in the present area of Vermont. (New York claims the area to the Connecticut, selects Westminster as shire town of Cumberland County instead of Chester.)
1773. A new courthouse and jail built at Westminster, after which conflicts of jurisdiction attend the attempt to hold court, and result in violence at last.
1775. The "Westminster Massacre," or killing and fatal wounding of two men of a large group who had gathered, anxious over their land titles, to prevent the opening of court under jurisdiction of New York (March 13), and were fired on by court officers.
1775. The outbreak of the Revolution overshadows the land-title controversy.
1777. Vermonters, denied entrance to the new union of states, announce their independence in a convention at Westminster. Many New Hampshire towns along the Connecticut River desire to be included in the new state and are admitted, though New Hampshire belongs to the Union.
1780. (March) Vermont legislature meets at Westminster.
1781. (October) Vermont legislature meets in what is now Charlestown, N. H. Vermont and New Hampshire almost at the point of civil war over the 45 towns east of the Connecticut River, then called "Washington County, Vermont," with Charlestown as shire town. Trouble between the sheriffs representing the two jurisdictions. General Washington, appealed to in the matter, advises Vermont to give up the forty-five towns. This incident furnishes one reason for admitting Vermont to the Union.
- 1782 (about) Seth Arnold gets a start at Westminster, shoemaking, tanning and farming. He may have derived something from being paid off in land for his Revolutionary services, as a Seth Arnold from Connecticut joined with others to petition for a tract of land near Lake Memphremagog (Oct. 2, 1780, Pomfret, Windham Co. Ct.) (*Nyc. State Papers of Vermont*. Vol. V. *Petitions for Land*. p. 179). After he came, there continued to be stirring events.
1784. The Windham County Rebellion, a flare-up of the New York and New Hampshire Grants issue. Citizens of Guilford sided with New York against the independent commonwealth of Vermont, refusing to serve in the Vermont troops when drafted. Gov. Chittenden ordered 250 men raised to support the civil authority. Ethan Allen knocked off the Cumberland County high sheriff's hat to announce his standing in the matter of jurisdiction, and later, when his troops were fired upon by the Guilfordites, issued a proclamation that unless they should peaceably submit to the authority of Vermont, he would lay Guilford as desolate as Sodom and Gomorrah.

Deacon Ephraim Ranney, a Revolutionary veteran, father of the girl who became wife of Seth Arnold in 1786 and mother of Seth Shaler Arnold in 1788, hesitated to lead the Westminster West militia against their brothers in Guilford, pondering his duty in the matter. But others did not hesitate to continue the quarrel and there were skirmishes, even winter fights on snowshoes, until the admission of Vermont to the Union in 1791 and the indemnification of New York for property losses to the amount of \$30,000 settled the land title controversy and left Westminster and other Vermont border towns free to cultivate the arts of peace.

It was in the stirring times of the Windham County Rebellion that Ethan Allen, lately a widower, courted and married in Westminster (Feb. 9, 1784) the spirited lady who when told that if she married General Allen she would be Queen of the new State replied, "And if I married the Devil, I should be the Queen of Hell," but who, when told by her admirer himself that he had come to get married, and married to her, and married at once, only replied, "Give me time to put on my Joseph."

1787. The ordinance of 1787, under the Articles of Confederation, starts the opening up of the West to which many of Seth Arnold's descendants, relatives, and neighbors emigrated before his death at nearly 102 in 1849.

Beginning with Seth Shaler Arnold in 1788, Seth and Esther (Ranney) Arnold had seven children: Seth, Ambrose Tyler, Esther, Joel Ranney, Phoebe, Olivia and Abigail. Olivia died at twelve years of age; Ambrose as a young man, leaving a widow, who married a Ranney, and two young sons, Ambrose and Fenelon, both of whom served as town officers in Westminster. Esther was first Mrs. John F. Hills, later Mrs. Benjamin Smith, and later yet, after her second husband died, returned to keep house for her aged father. Joel Ranney was a minister, married an Arnold (Julia), and had a large family. His ministry was largely in Connecticut, but he was the first pastor of the Congregational Church in Bellows Falls, Vermont. Phoebe and her husband, Isaac Holton, moved to Illinois. They too had a large family. Abigail never married. She seems to have been an invalid of some sort, as provisions are made for guardianship after her father's death.

About the time of the birth of Abigail, Seth Arnold built a new house on the Upper Street of Westminster (S.S.A.'s Diary: entry of July 9, 1849) where they lived the rest of their lives, being "very constantly at home."

The "Upper Street," it should be explained, is so-called because it is the northern part of the two-mile stretch called the King's Highway which runs north and south on the east side of Westminster. In altitude it is much lower than the so-called "Lower Street" to the south. The two are upper and lower also in respect to the river's flow. The Lower Street is the site of the Court House of the "Westminster Massacre." In the cemetery north of its rows of square stately houses, opposite the site of the massacre and near the steep pitch leading downwards and north to the Upper Street may be found the graves of many of the persons who figure in the Rev. Seth Arnold's diary.

By geography Westminster falls naturally into the East Parish and the West Parish, divided by high hills. The Rev. Alfred Stevens, husband of Rev. Mr.

Arnold's oldest daughter, Mary Ann, was the pastor of the West Parish for more than forty years.

On his fortieth anniversary of coming to the West Parish, he gave a reminiscent sermon which is of interest to readers of his father-in-law's diary, as he has much to say of the people of his parish, and many of them are mentioned too in the diary's many pages.

One observation in his sermon is that he never found any church quarrel that could not be settled if the people involved approached their difficulties in good will.

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PART II

SILKWORM-RAISING PROJECT OF THE REV. S. S. ARNOLD OF WESTMINSTER, VERMONT

Research Notes by Dorothy C. Walter

References to the planting and culture of mulberries, securing and hatching silkworms and feeding them, "curing" the cocoons, reeling the silk, attending silk-raisers' meetings, subscribing to a trade journal about silk-growing, and disposing of the product by barter or by sale, occur on the following dates in the reprinted text of Mr. Arnold's diaries.

1. *Mulberry trees*

1835	May	2	....	"	13	....	Oct.	13
....	"	13	....	Oct.	10	....	"	29
1836	"	3	....	"	30	....	Nov.	28
....	Nov.	30	1840	Apr.	25	....	Dec.	10
1839	May	4	....	May	8	1841	May	4
....	"	9	....	"	14	....	Oct.	4

2. *Cocoons—bounty—mulberries, etc.*

1841	Nov.	26	....	July	2	....	"	16
1842	Apr.	6	....	"	7	....	"	18
....	"	7	....	"	12	....	"	22
....	"	12	....	"	13	....	"	30
....	"	13	....	"	19	....	Sept.	1
....	"	23	....	Aug.	4	....	"	6
....	June	18	....	"	15	....	"	7

....	"	17	....	"	3	....	May 13
....	"	19	....	"	4	(Were	"tags" the
....	"	21	....	"	6	remnant	of the silk
....	"	26	....	"	31	output?	Mr. Gleason
....	"	27	....	June	5	and Mr. Sargent	in the silk business.)
....	"	28	(Interesting	to see the		....	"
....	"	30	change from	the word		....	"
....	Oct.	3	pantaloons	to pants		....	"
....	"	8	happening	in the		....	June 11
....	"	15	course of	the jour-		....	"
....	"	17	nals.)			(A loss)	
....	"	20	....	"	14	....	"
....	"	24	....	July	1	....	"
....	"	25	....	"	20	....	July 5
....	"	26	....	Aug.	3	....	"
....	"	28	....	"	4	....	"
....	"	29	....	"	7	....	"
....	Nov.	1	....	"	12	....	Aug. 8
....	"	14	....	"	26	....	"
....	"	16	....	Sept.	20	....	"
....	"	25	....	"	26	....	Sept. 3
....	"	30	....	Oct.	3	....	"
....	Dec.	7	....	"	18	....	"
....	"	9	(Mr. Gleason	and		....	Oct. 10
....	"	20	Mrs. Messenger	were		(Wedding gown?)	
1843	Jan.	23	in the silkworm	business.)		....	Nov. 4
....	Mar.	1	....	"	19	(For the bride?)	
....	"	15	....	"	19	....	"
....	"	22	1844	Jan.	15	1845	Feb. 17
....	"	31	....	Mar.	15	(Bounty)	
....	Apr.	28	....	Apr.	3		
....	May	2					

PART III

PERFECTIONISTS IN THE WESTMINSTER CHURCH

It would be surprising indeed if the development of the Perfectionist sect by John Humphrey Noyes in the neighboring town of Putney should have escaped the notice of such a vigilant shepherd as the Rev. S. S. Arnold or have had no repercussions in his home church at Westminster, or in other churches with which he had contact by exchange or by being called in to help settle differences between members.

Noyes, the son of one of Vermont's representatives in Congress and a cousin of President Rutherford B. Hayes on his mother's side, was born in Brattleboro

in 1811. After graduation at Dartmouth in 1830(?) he was converted to Congregationalism at Putney and attended Andover Theological Seminary and also studied at Yale. In New Haven he became interested in the theories of the Perfectionists. He was licensed to preach in 1833, but the license was revoked because of the unconventional attitude toward marriage which grew out of his new beliefs.

In complete contrast to the dark views of orthodox Congregationalism of those days, that

*In Adam's fall
We sinned all,*

and that depravity was, therefore, the natural state of man and only to be alleviated by conversion of the wicked through the saving power of God, the Perfectionists believed that it is possible for human beings to lead a sinless life. As a corollary Noyes held that restraint of mating by marriage laws is as unnecessary as restraint of eating or drinking, all being normal activities of the perfectible natural man.

In 1838 Noyes returned to Putney. People were drawn to him, and he soon gathered a large number of followers, teaching them his views on "Bible Communism" and "Complex Marriage." He married one of his converts, and without exhibitionism began to put his theories into practice.

When, after some time, the meaning of his views became known to his orthodox neighbors, they were horrified. Noyes was arrested on October 25, 1847, gave bond, and then fled away to Oneida, New York, where he and his followers started the Oneida Community, a socialistic experiment in living and laboring which prospered after a few lean years. In 1879, out of deference to public opinion, not through any change in views as to the desirability of the practice, "Complex Marriage" was given up.

In April, 1838, Rev. Seth S. Arnold replaced the aged Westminster pastor, the Rev. Sylvester Sage, who had been in the same church, except for two years, all his ministerial life of nearly half a century. Mr. Sage knew it was time for him to go. His wife had recently died. He was old. The young folks needed a new hand. On December 31, 1837, Mr. Arnold wrote in his diary, "Attended Mr. Sage's meeting—Some of the singers left the seats—offended with Mr. Sage." He himself had long since given up the practice of noting down what text the old minister preached from, as he always did when other men's sermons interested him. On February 18, he noted that Mr. Sage communicated his intention of closing his labors. On April 29 he wrote: "Attended Mr. Sage's meeting. He preached his farewell sermon from Philipians [*sic*] 1:27, with faithful addresses to the Ch'h and people—to the impenitent—to parents and the young and warned them against 'the soul-destroying doctrine of universalism.' Full meeting—numbers were affected—It has been about 48 years since he was settled here. I made a statement of the conditions of my preaching here."

Rev. Mr. Arnold was willing to supply the church while a suitable new minister was being discovered, but the heavy responsibilities of carrying on the myriad enterprises of his father's farm made him unable to become a settled minister anywhere, even in his home town. As interim pastor he embarked at

once in an aggressive program of organizing the church work to make it interesting, with temperance lectures, a Sunday School society, and singing school to improve the church music. After the summer's farm work was out of the way, he began an evangelistic campaign with alarming sermons on texts that showed the reward of the wicked and the promises of the gospel. Professors (of religion, of course) were urged to interview the unconverted; inquiry meetings were held in which questions might be put to church members by those who felt drawn to the church; there were concerts of prayer and extra sermons by neighboring ministers. Large numbers, for a small community, began to "indulge hopes" and were eventually added to the church. The revival began with a day of fasting.

Some hopes were built on shifting sands, it is true. Called away to settle a dispute between church members in Keene, N. H., where a mutual council of churches on Feb. 6, 1839, "set up all night—and resulted about 1 o'clock P.M. in sustaining charge of falsehood against Mr. Babbit," Mr. Arnold returned to Westminster to find a backslider in his own flock who had succumbed to his carnal nature, and recorded, "To my great grief, one of the young converts, Charles Thrasher overcome by temptation joined an oyster party in the eve. when there was a prayer meeting at the meeting house."

But on the whole the revival was successful, and in after years was pointed to with satisfaction as a fine accomplishment. It was Mr. Arnold's answer to the threat of the Putney Perfectionists—his lifelong message—that the great work of saving souls was the mission of the church and the way to perfection for humankind, who must experience conviction of sin and the power of the gospel to cleanse sin, and then the joy of oneness with God.

That the Westminster church really was threatened by the Putney sect of John Humphrey Noyes may be seen from the following entries in Mr. Arnold's Journal.

June 13, 1838. "Attended Ch'h-prayer meeting—after which the Ch'h decided to suspend Mrs. Fanny Lord & *Harriet Ann Holton* unanimously."

March 5, 1841. "Attended Sacramental lecture. *Mrs. Noyes* and Mrs. Lord were cut off from the ch'h, and Oril Gould in three months if she do not return to the fellowship of the Ch'h." Of Oril Gould he said in another place that a call on her was not unpleasant, but that she said she simply could not walk in fellowship with the church and wanted to be out of it. On May 2, 1845, he wrote, "Visited 11 families in the south part of the parish—Took dinner at Deac. Pains and an unpleasant talk with Mrs. Lord," doubtless the one suspended and later excommunicated.

Hemenway's Gazetteer identifies for us one of the women in these entries. In Vol. V., article on Westminster, in a list of teachers in the Westminster Sunday School which includes two sisters of the Rev. Seth S. Arnold, Esther (Arnold) Hills and Phebe Arnold (later Mrs. Isaac Holton), and Mary Ann May (later Mrs. Governor Fletcher), occurs the name of Harriet Ann Holton, labeled "now *Mrs. John Noyes*."

In the same volume and article, among the descendants of Joel Holton, Harriet Ann Holton appears again. She was the daughter of John and Harriet (Richards) Holton, and married the *Rev. J. H. Noyes*.

Harriet's father, John Holton, was the brother of the Rev. S. S. Arnold's

younger sister Phebe's husband, Isaac Holton. So Mr. Arnold must have felt that not only his church, but his family too, must be protected against the Perfectionists, and so he joined with his Putney colleague, the Rev. Amos Foster, who was "the wise leader and counsellor of the church in its prompt and firm treatment of this most blighting heresy." (See *Hemenway* article on Putney.)

It would be interesting to know, also, if the Perfectionists sect were responsible for the many trips to Westmoreland, New Hampshire, to adjust differences between church members made by Mr. Arnold during the time that he was serving the Westminster church as interim pastor in 1838 and 1839.

Note to the Editor

When I gave you the notes about Seth S. Arnold and the Perfectionists, I felt pretty certain that the Harriet Ann Holton whom they excommunicated unanimously, along with Mrs. Fanny Lord, on June 13, 1838, must be the wife of John Humphrey Noyes, the perfectionist leader, but there was one little link in the chain that was doubtful.

I knew that when the excommunication became final on March 5, 1841, the entry spoke of *Mrs. Noyes* and *Mrs. Lord*. And I knew that *Hemenway* twice listed Harriet Ann Holton as "now Mrs. John Noyes," and "married the Rev. J. H. Noyes." The dates were right and the place was right.

However, there could have been other ministers of the name of J. H. Noyes (or John Noyes), and also Harriet Ann Holton might not have been the convert whom John Humphrey Noyes married. It seemed as if there needed to be one statement more.

This I found in the XIth Edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Volume XX, page 106, article on the Oneida Community; "He continued to promulgate his ideas of a higher Christian life and soon had disciples in many places, one of whom, *Harriet A. Holton*, a woman of means, he married in 1838."

So the chain is complete.

Dorothy C. Waller